

state of utah



DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

DOUGLAS F. DAY  
Director

1596 West North Temple/Salt Lake City, Utah 84116/801-533-9333

December 21, 1981

JIM  
DEC 28 1981

Mr. Cleon B. Feight, Director  
Division of Oil, Gas and Mining  
4241 State Office Building  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Dear Jack:

Enclosed is a copy of an advertisement that was published in the Vernal Express on Thursday, December 3, 1981. I don't know if this is a response to discussions that you have had with Chevron since our November 20 meeting, but it obviously indicates a commitment by Chevron to resolve the environmental problems extant on this mine site.

It is our understanding that representatives of your Division recently conducted an on-site inspection of Chevron's operation, and we would be interested in learning the results of that inspection.

As Darrell Nish indicated to you at the November 20 meeting, we are most interested in assisting you in anyway that we can in finding solutions to the reclamation problems inherent in this phosphate mining operation. We feel it would be beneficial to all concerned if channels of communication could be opened between our Division and Chevron representatives at the mine site. To date, there has been no such communication either with Chevron or previously with Stauffer Chemical Company in attempting to formulate reclamation plans. We feel we could be of assistance both to your agency and to Chevron given an opportunity. We can draw upon the experience of both our Northeastern Regional personnel as well as Richard Stevens at the Ephraim Experiment Station, who has had substantial reclamation experience.

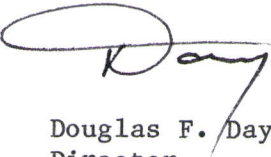
We assume that the greatly expanded development program that Chevron has undertaken will require at least an amendment to the existing mine plan. We would very much appreciate an opportunity to review that plan and to work with you and with Chevron in assuring minimization of impact to the critical wildlife values associated with the land in question and adjacent lands. Aside from wildlife values existing on the properties themselves, these lands serve as vital links for wildlife migrating between public lands above and below Chevron's boundary. Additionally, mining operations on company property have the potential for negatively impacting wildlife off site, particularly aquatic wildlife. We believe our participation in such a planning effort would strengthen your program and would have the potential for alleviating many of the concerns Vernal area residents have concerning project impacts on wildlife.

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We realize that the lands in question are private lands owned by Chevron Resources Company, but the wildlife values being impacted both on the property and on adjacent lands are public values that must be protected.

We will appreciate your advising us of how we might best become more involved in resolving the problems attendant to this mining operation. Your consideration of our concerns is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Douglas F. Day  
Director



*Vernal Express*  
*Thursday, December 3, 1981*

*7-3-81*



# The Chevron Challenge

Last December, when Standard Oil Company of California (Socal) purchased the 20-year-old phosphate mining operation north of Vernal, we also accepted its challenges, problems and responsibilities.

While functioning within compliance of our approved mining permit, we now are vigorously engaged in a program of expanding and modernizing these operations which will assure a stable work force and significant economic contributions to Vernal and Uintah County.

But, our challenge isn't simply to establish a safe and profitable mining operation...our challenge is also to protect the environment of our area.

We are developing carefully engineered programs which will allow us to operate in harmony with the fisheries, wildlife and grazing values of the Big Brush Creek area and we will endeavor to preserve, and actually enhance, these precious values.

Through a comprehensive resource management program which considers both the practical and esthetic aspects of our operations, we are determining exactly how we will contour, restore, improve and revegetate the land we mine.

At Vernal Phosphate, we are proud of what we are accomplishing and we will invite the public to see firsthand our new facilities when construction is completed in the spring.

When you visit our operations, we also want to demonstrate for you how we are meeting the challenge of providing a viable mining facility, and, at the same time, how we are meeting the challenge of protecting...preserving...and improving our beautiful environment.



**Chevron Resources Company**  
**Vernal Phosphate Operations**



# Phosphate development

Dear Editor:

I am again prompted to address the problem of phosphate development north of Vernal. This need stems in part from a considerable and somewhat unexpected number of contacts made with me regarding the matter. Several phone calls to my home as well as encounters in the community have been most encouraging. A second reason for response was a recent article in the Express. I refer to the article which appeared in the Vernal Express shortly after my first letter to the Editor, regarding the phosphate development. The timing of that feature as well as certain references made therein can hardly be attributed to coincidence. Of particular interest was the rather casual statement credited to one of the officials of the phosphate company, the substance of which was that the organization had always been concerned and had taken measures to minimize damage. If this be true then the situation is probably worse than had been perceived. The bare rolling hills directly above the phosphate plant stand as mute testimony.

An additional reason for this letter is the emergence of additional development problems which were not previously referenced.

Before proceeding to further delineate the negative aspects of the resource development let us again recognize the considerable value of the employment and product which is provided and should not be denied. Any further efforts to propagandize the worth is unnecessary. The idea of having the best of both sides i.e. truly minimizing the negative aspects of the project as well as reaping the benefits, seems desirable and should be required.

Some of the information which has recently come to light from different individuals comes by way of belief or reports and may not in its entirety be completely accurate. Enough truth is present to be significant. An example which is worthy of note is a reliable report that even though the project is on private property an impact statement was required and seems now to be largely ignored. The fact that on more than one occasion recently the water in Big Brush Creek as flow beneath Highway 44, has had the green mucky appearance of something flowing into a sewage treatment plant requires only casual observation. The wet storms of October along with other factors served to convey material from denuded areas into the normally sparkling stream.

Another interesting aspect of the obvious pollution of Big Brush Creek is the lack of protest or even comment from public officials charged with responsibility for overseeing the interests of projects which affect the public. Various sections of the Utah Code (Law) deal with pollution of waters. Sections 73-14-1 to 73-14-13 clearly defines pollution, public policy, pollutions as public nuisance, inspection, investigations and other regulations. Sections 73-14-10 provides for fines up to \$50,000.00 per day for water pollution violations. Sections 73-14-4 states in part that it is unlawful to cause pollution of water which constitutes a menace to public health and welfare or is harmful to wildlife, fish or aquatic life, or impairs domestic, agricultural, industrial, recreational or other beneficial uses of water, or to place or cause to be placed any wastes in a location where there is probable cause to believe they will cause pollution. Why is this ignored?

One concern expressed by an individual was in regard to the effect of stream pollution on the trout in Big Brush Creek and the Red Fleet Reservoir. The idea concerned the possible coating of stream and lake bed with an undesirable residue detrimental to fish habitat. Further, we have heard much about the particulate (silt and sand) problem in the Vernal City water system. Where does this leave us in terms of the material which will be pouring into the Red Fleet water being scheduled for use by the local community. Again, it appears that the silence of various people conveys the idea that they have been muzzled. If there is no problem, beyond aesthetic damage, which is undesirable, then let it be stated as a matter of record and then the facts can be further examined.

Some one once said that unless one had a solution to a problem perhaps not too much should be made of it. I therefore submit that as a partial solution to the problem of destroying the landscape that funds should be clearly identified as a part of the cost of production and as being available for rehabilitation of the area. One additional proposal might be for the phosphate company having mined the property to pass title of the land to the Federal Government, State or even private agencies or individuals who would be willing to convert it back to use and public enjoyment.

TOM FREESTONE

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